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Amendments to the Drawings

The replacement sheets of drawings attached hereto as **Exhibit A** include changes to, and replace, Figures 1 and 5B of the original sheets of drawings. Label "207" has been removed from Fig. 1. Labels "85" and "86" have been removed from Fig. 5B.

Attachment: replacement sheets of drawings for Figures 1 and 5B

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REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 21, 2008. Claims 1-28 were pending. By this Amendment, claims 1-5, 9, 10, 15-19 and 24 have been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter. Claims 1-28 remain pending upon entry of this amendment, with claims 1 and 15 being in independent form.

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5). The specification was objected to as purportedly having informalities. Claim 15 was objected to as purportedly having informalities.

The specification, drawings and claims have been reviewed and amended to address the formal matters noted in the Office Action.

The replacement sheets of drawings attached hereto as **Exhibit A** include changes to, and replace, Figures 1 and 5B of the original sheets of drawings.

Withdrawal of the objection to the specification, the objection to the drawings and the objection to the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 14-17 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as purportedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,873,016 to Kurokawa et al. Claims 4, 5, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kurokawa in view of Ohata et al. (JP2002-193471). Claims 6 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kurokawa in view of Ohata and further in view of Kawaishi et al. (JP 5-306037). Claims 7 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kurokawa in view of Ohata and further in view of Maki (JP 4-169440). Claims 8-10 and 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kurokawa in view of Hayakawa et al. (JP 2002-60085). Claims 11 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

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as purportedly unpatentable over Kurokawa in view of Hayakawa and further in view of Maki. Claims 13 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over Kurokawa in view of Omata et al. (US 2002/0110392 A1).

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is allowable over the cited art, for at least the reason that the cited art does not disclose or suggest the aspect of the present application that the first and second beads formed on an inner side of the conveyance belt allow a deflection of the conveyance belt in the thrust direction and while at the same time restricting that deflection. Each of independent claims 1 and 15 addresses such aspects, as well as additional features.

Kurokawa, as understood by applicant, proposes a belt cleaning apparatus in which an conveyor belt (35), provided with a pair of belt-shaped side stopper members (65'), is suspended by a plurality of rollers (36) including a predetermined roller which is configured to contact both inner side surfaces of the side stopper members as the belt travels, as shown in Fig. 4C thereof.

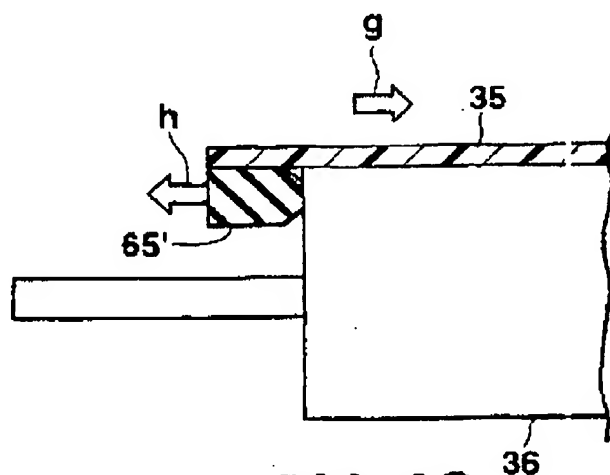


FIG.4C

The side stopper members 65' of Kurokawa are apparently equated in the Office Action with the beads of the present application.

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However, the side stopper members 65' of Kurokawa are *NOT* configured to allow a displacement of the belt in the thrust direction. To the contrary, the side stopper members of Kurokawa prevent the endless belt from sideslipping in the width direction (see Kurokawa, col.4, lines 44-45).

Applicant submits that Kurokawa simply does not disclose or suggest the above-mentioned aspect of the present application.

Ohata, Kawaishi, Omata, Maki nor Hayakawa likewise do not disclose or suggest the aspect of the present application that the first and second beads formed on the conveyance belt allow a deflection of the conveyance belt in the thrust direction and while at the same time restricting that deflection.

Applicant submits that the cited art, even when considered along with common sense and common knowledge to one skilled in the art, does *NOT* render unpatentable the above-mentioned aspect of the present application.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1 and 15, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

The Office Action indicates that claims 12 and 26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, since independent claims 1 and 15 are submitted to be patentable over the cited art, no changes to the form of claims 12 and 26 are believed to be necessary.

In view of the remarks hereinabove, applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance, and earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper

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should be considered to be such a petition. The Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge any required fees in connection with this amendment, and to credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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NJM

EXHIBIT A

to
AMENDMENT
(Serial No. 10/532,852)